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SUBJECT: GERMANY/BAVARIA: CSU HOPES FOR FRESH START WITH NEW AND
YOUNGER FACES IN CABINET AND A DYNAMIC SECRETARY GENERAL

11. (SBU) Newly-elected Bavarian Minister-President Horst Seehofer (Christian Social Union - CSU) elevated youthful, female, and fresh faces in the presentation of his surprising cabinet choices on October 30. In a canny move, he also chose 36-year-old Bundestag member Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg as CSU Secretary General. This makes zu Guttenberg effectively the spokesman, television personality, and advisor to the CSU leadership. He is also a Berlin player, serving as the CSU's main foreign policy expert and member of the Bundestag Foreign Affairs Committee. (Note: While zu Guttenberg likely will choose to retain his Bundestag seat, his office at CSU headquarters in Munich told us said it is not clear whether he will remain on the Foreign Affairs Committee or switch to a committee oriented toward domestic affairs. End note.) Seehofer's choice underlines the CSU's claim to be more than just a regional party, particularly in view of the 2009 European Parliament and federal elections. The group (para 4 below) needs to appeal to skeptical citizenry if the CSU hopes to do better in European and Bundestag elections in 2009.

22. (SBU) Complicating Seehofer's and the new cabinet's task is the new presence of three members of the coalition member Free Democratic Party (FDP) (one is a State Secretary), who will make their own attempts to strike a favorable profile. In all, Seehofer replaced sixteen of the eighteen cabinet positions with eight newcomers. He could be accused of ageism since he dismissed all CSU cabinet members over 60 years old, thus drastically reducing the government's age average below 50. Five cabinet members are women. Notably, the Landtag also elected its first female President, the 64-year-old Barbara Stamm.

33. (SBU) The new Bavarian cabinet will consist of the following members, all CSU unless otherwise noted as FDP:

- Minister President: Horst Seehofer, 59, Upper Bavaria, elected on October 27 (new);
- Minister of Economics and Deputy Minister President: Martin Zeil (FDP), 52, Upper Bavaria (new);
- MOE State Secretary: Katja Hessel (FDP), 36, Middle Franconia (new);
- Minister of Interior: Joachim Herrmann, 52, Middle Franconia (the incumbent);
- MOI State Secretary: Bernd Weiss, 40, Lower Franconia (new);
- Minister for Labor and Social Affairs: Christine Haderthauer, 47, Upper Bavaria (new, formerly General Secretary of the CSU);
- State Secretary: Markus Sackmann, 47, Upper Palatinate (new);
- Minister at the Bavarian State Chancery: Siegfried Schneider, 52, Upper Bavaria (new);
- Minister for European and Federal Affairs: Emilia Mueller, 56, Upper Palatinate (new);
- Minister of Finance: Georg Fahrenschon, 40, Upper Bavaria (new);
- MOF State Secretary: Franz Josef Pschierer, 52, Suabia (new);
- Minister of Environment: Markus Soeder, 41, Middle Franconia (new);
- MOEnv State Secretary: Melanie Huml, 33, Upper Franconia (new);

-Minister of Agriculture: Helmut Brunner, 54, Lower Bavaria (new);
-Minister of Justice: Dr. Beate Merk, 51, Suabia;
-Minister of Science: Dr. Wolfgang Heubisch (FDP), 62, Upper Bavaria (new);
-Minister of Culture and Education: Ludwig Spaenle, 47, Upper Bavaria;
--MOC&Ed State Secretary: Dr. Marcel Huber, 50, Upper Bavaria (new).

(NOTE: Diplopedia has biographies on German political figures at:
<http://diplopedia.state.gov> and then search for Germany Biographies.

¶4. (SBU) Comment: Seehofer's cabinet is mainly remarkable for its youthful representation. We view the surprise nomination of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg as Secretary General as a clever move, particularly in view of the CSU's claim of being more than just a regional Bavarian party. Zu Guttenberg is a foreign policy expert, a transatlanticist and a close and well-known friend to the United States and Mission Germany.

¶5. (U) Consulate General Munich coordinated this report with Embassy Berlin.

¶6. (U) Track Munich reporting at at
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Portal:Germ> any.

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